

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-25

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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R 041541Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3065

INFO AMCONSUL CURACAO

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1075

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NS, NL

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENCE FOR SURINAM

REF: A) PARAMARIBO 65

B) CURACAO 112

SUMMARY. SENOR GON OFFICIAL FORECASTS SURINAM WILL
ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE DURING 1976, RATHER THAN BY
END OF 1975. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MARCH 1, POLITICAL COUNSELOR CALLED ON
MERCKELBACH, FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR TO PRIME MINISTER
DEN UYL, TO DISCUSS PROSPECTS FOR SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE.
MERCKELBACH HAD ACCOMPANIED DEN UYL ON HIS
RECENT FIVE-DAY VISIT TO SURINAM.

2. IN RESPONSE TO OPENING COMMENT, MERCKELBACH
EXPLAINED THAT INTENTION OF PRESENT GOS TO ACHIEVE
INDEPENDENCE NEED NOT BE HINDERED BY CONSTITUTIONAL
REQUIREMENT THAT TWO-THIRDS OF SURINAM'S PARLIAMENT
VOTE FOR ALTERATION OF EXISTING REALM STATUTE WHICH
GOVERNS RELATIONS BETWEEN SURINAM, ANTILLES AND
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NETHERLANDS. HE SAID SHOULD GOS FAIL TO ACHIEVE

TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, FURTHER VOTE COULD BE HELD MONTH THEREAFTER, ON WHICH OCCASION ONLY SIMPLE MAJORITY WOULD BE REQUIRED TO CHANGE STATUTE.

3. MERCKELBACH THOUGHT ARE ON GOVERNMENT'S RECENT POLICY DECLARATION REGARDING INDEPENDENCE BY END OF 1975 HAD GALVANIZED SURINAMESE PUBLIC OPINION AND THAT EVEN OPPOSITION HINDUSTANIS NOW WERE BEING FORCED TO THINK ABOUT INDEPENDENCE IN CONCRETE TERMS. HE OPINED THAT IF PRESENT GOS CONTINUES IN POWER, WHICH IT SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO IF IT BRINGS ABOUT IMPROVEMENT IN LOT OF POPULATION AND DOES NOT FALL PREY TO CORRUPTION, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR SURINAM TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE DURING 1976. MERCKELBACH DID NOT FEEL IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO COMPLETE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE AS EARLY AS 1975.

4. IN REPSONE TO QUESTION, MERCKELBACH SAID SURINAM WOULD RECEIVED MORE RATHER THAN LESS AID FROM NETHERLANDS FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE, AND WOULD BE ADDED TO LIST OF TARGET COUNTRIES FOR RECEIPT OF DUTCH DEVELOPMENTAL AID.

5. AS FAR AS EFFECT OF SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE ON STABILITY OF THE AREA, MERCKELBACH OBSERVED THAT ONLY POTENTIAL PROBLEM WOULD BE SETTLEMENT OF BOUNDARY ISSUES. PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL HAD INDICATED GON WOULD ENDEAVOR TO BRING ABOUT SETTLEMENT OF THESE QUESTIONS PRIOR TO SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE BUT THAT RESOLUTION OF THEM WAS NOT SINE QUO NON OF INDEPENDENCE; SURINAM COULD DEAL WITH THEM AFTER ACHIEVING SOVEREIGNTY.

6. REGARDING SURINAM'S DEFENSE DNEES, MERCKELBACH RECALLED EARLIER ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT WHICH HAD CONCLUDED THAT SURINAM DID NOT HAVE EXTERNAL DEFENSE PROBLEM AND THAT ITS NEED WAS LIMITED TO MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL SECURITY WHICH COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY POLICE OR PARA-MILITARY FORCE. GON WOULD BE ASSISTING GOS IN THIS FIELD.

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7. AT ONE POINT IN CONVERSATION MERCKELBACH SAID IT WAS INTERESTING THAT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT HE DID NOT ONCE HEAR ANYONE REFER TO "COMMONWEALTH" CONCEPT WHEN SPEAKING OF FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NETHERLANDS AND SURINAM.

8. MERCKELBACH SAID PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL WOULD BE FORMALLY PRPOSING TO GON THAT THREE REALM PRIME

MINISTERS MEET SHORTLY TO DISCUSS SUBJECT OF INDEPENDENCE. HE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT ISSUE WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN REALM COMMISSION SINCE SURINAM SECTION OF COMMISSION IS COMPOSED OF INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT SHARE VIEWS OF PRIME MINISTER ARRON AND HIS GOVERNMENT. LATTER THEREFORE COULD BE EXPECTED TO AVOID WORKING THROUGH THAT MECHANISM.

9. MERCKELBACH VOLUNTEERED THAT SITUATION WITH REGARD TO ANTILLES IS OF COURSE TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF SURINAM. FOR EXAMPLE, ANTILLES ARE NOT FREE FROM THREAT OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE AND IMBALANCE, NUMERICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, BETWEEN COLORED AND WHITE ELEMENTS OF POPULATION IS SERIOUS PROBLEM. DURING HIS RECENT BRIEF STOPOVER IN ANTILLES HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT ANTILLES WOULD NOT BE READY FOR INDEPENDENCE FOR ANOTHER FIVE TO TEN YEARS. GON WOULD HAVE BETTER FEEL FOR SITUATION FOLLOWING RETURN OF INTERIOR MINISTER DE GAAY FORTMAN FROM HIS CURRENT VISIT TO ANTILLES.

10. PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL'S COMMENTS ON OUTLOOK FOR SURINAMESE INDEPENDENCE ARE BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL. GOULD

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